



AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION

Memorandum of Support

DATE: February 29, 2016

TO: Honorable Members of the Alaska Labor and Commerce Committee

FROM: Dr. Steven A. Loomis, President, American Optometric Association (AOA)

RE: Senate Bill 55 SUPPORT

On behalf of the American Optometric Association (AOA), I would like to communicate our unified support for Senate Bill 55, currently assigned to the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee.

SB 55 would allow practicing doctors of optometry to employ the same comprehensive, quality, standard of care, to better diagnose and treat vision health related issues. SB 55 would also encourage current optometric students to return home to Alaska when their education is complete, so these new doctors of optometry could utilize the same high levels of eye care being taught by optometric colleges nationwide.

Senate Bill 55 would not broaden the scope of what conditions optometrists currently manage and/or treat, but would simply enable doctors of optometry to utilize the latest technologies to bring their patients the best possible eye care available. By allowing the use of laser technology to treat conditions optometrists already manage, it will grant Alaskan citizens access to the most up to date eye care in their local communities, saving patients valuable time and additional costs by having these procedures done within the optometrist's hometown office.

In those states that currently utilize the latest laser technology for optometric practices, the liability insurance rates have not seen any significant increase, and remain a significant objective standard for the measure of the risk associated with a medical professions practice. Not only have liability rates remained low in these states which utilize lasers for optometry, there has not been a single reported complaint to those states governing body or legal actions associated with the employment of these devices.

Accordingly, the American Optometric Association **SUPPORTS SB 55** and would ask for your **YES VOTE ON SB 55** in the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee when it comes before you for a vote. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact AOA's Director of State Government Relations, Daniel Carey, at dcarey@aoa.org or 703-837-1343.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S.A. Loomis".

Steven A. Loomis, O.D.
President, American Optometric Association